

CHARACTERIZATION OF SOFT SOIL USING MULTI-CHANNEL ANALYSIS OF
SURFACE WAVES (MASW) AND ELECTRICAL RESISTIVITY METHOD (ERM)

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For my beloved mother and father



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ABSTRACT

This thesis demonstrates the research on the soft soil characteristics using geophysical methods. The need on non-intrusive, time efficient, economic and larger volume of investigation had increased the demand of using geophysical methods for geotechnical investigation. The research concentrates on the determination of soft soil shear-wave velocity (V_s) profile using the multi-channel analysis of surface waves (MASW) and the soil stratigraphy using Electrical Resistivity Method (ERM). The soft soil V_s and stratigraphy were determined and correlated with the peat sampler and borehole data to obtain more accurate data. The research was conducted at Parit Nipah and RECESS UTHM. The V_s obtained for peat and soft clay at Parit Nipah was in the range of 29.7 to 34.9 m/s and 36.8 to 76.9 m/s respectively. While, the soft clay V_s obtained at RECESS was in the range of 64.4 to 124.0 m/s. The lower V_s obtained on peat compared to soft clay was due to the heterogeneity of peat. The soil strata obtained by ERM had good agreement with the peat sampler and borehole data. The resistivity value of peat and soft clay obtained at Parit Nipah was in the range of 47.2 to 127.7 ohm.m and 9.4 to 25.8 ohm.m correspondingly. While, at RECESS soft clay, the resistivity value was in the range of 1.0 to 4.6 ohm.m. The lower resistivity value of soft clay was governed by the amount of clay fraction which was related to cation exchange capacity (CEC). As higher CEC results in higher conductivity. The relationship obtained between the 1-D V_s and 1-D resistivity value shows that consistent value of peat V_s was followed by the slight decrease in peat resistivity value. While, drastic increase in soft clay V_s results in a significant decrease in soft clay resistivity value. This concluded that stiffness does not produce significant effect on the soil resistivity. Overall, MASW and ERM produced high quality data for subsurface investigation in larger volume with timely efficient manner and more economic.

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini menunjukkan kajian mengenai ciri-ciri tanah lembut menggunakan kaedah geofizik. Keperluan terhadap kajian tidak intrusif, cekap masa, ekonomi dan isipadu kajian yang lebih besar telah meningkatkan permintaan terhadap kaedah geofizik untuk kajian geoteknik. Kajian ini difokuskan dalam mendapatkan ciri-ciri berkenaan halaju gelombang ricih tanah lembut menggunakan kaedah *Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves (MASW)* dan mengenal pasti jenis strata tanah menggunakan *Electrical Resistivity Method (ERM)*. Halaju gelombang ricih tanah lembut dan strata tanah diwujudkan dan dibandingkan dengan maklumat tanah yang diperoleh dari penyampel tanah gambut dan lubang gerudi untuk memperoleh data yang lebih tepat. Kajian ini telah dijalankan di Parit Nipah, dan RECESS UTHM. Halaju gelombang ricih yang diperolehi untuk tanah gambut dan tanah liat lembut di Parit Nipah adalah masing-masing dalam lingkungan 29.7 ke 34.9 m/s dan 36.8 ke 76.9 m/s. Manakala, bagi tanah liat lembut yang diperolehi di RECESS adalah dalam lingkungan 64.4 ke 124.0 m/s. Halaju gelombang ricih yang rendah diperolehi di tanah gambut berbanding tanah liat lembut adalah kerana sifat kepelbagaian yang terdapat pada tanah gambut. Lapisan strata tanah yang diperolehi menggunakan kaedah *ERM* dipersetujui oleh data pensampel tanah gambut dan data lubang gerudi. Nilai kerintangan tanah gambut dan tanah liat lembut yang diperolehi di Parit Nipah adalah sejajar dalam lingkungan 47.2 ke 127.7 ohm.m dan 9.4 ke 25.8 ohm.m. Manakala, pada tanah liat lembut RECESS, nilai kerintangan adalah dalam lingkungan 1.0 ke 4.6 ohm.m. Nilai kerintangan pada tanah liat lembut yang rendah dipengaruhi oleh bilangan pecahan tanah liat yang berkait rapat dengan kapasiti pertukaran kation. Kadar kapasiti pertukaran kation yang tinggi menyumbang kepada kekonduksian yang tinggi. Hubungkait di antara halaju gelombang ricih tanah satu dimensi dan nilai kerintangan satu dimensi menunjukkan bahawa nilai konsisten halaju gelombang ricih tanah gambut diikuti dengan

sedikit penurunan pada nilai kerintangan tanah gambut. Manakala, penurunan drastik pada halaju gelombang ricih tanah menghasilkan sedikit penurunan pada nilai kerintangan tanah liat lembut. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa kekakuan tidak menghasilkan kesan ketara terhadap kerintangan tanah. Secara keseluruhan, *MASW* dan *ERM* menghasilkan data berkualiti untuk kajian sub strata tanah untuk isipadu yang lebih besar dengan kaedah lebih berkesan dan lebih ekonomi.



TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xxii
LIST OF APPENDIX	xxiii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research background	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Aim	3
1.4 Objectives	3
1.5 Scope of research	4
1.6 Significance of research	4
1.7 Thesis layout	5
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Soft soil	6
2.2.1 Peat soil	6
2.2.2 Clay soil	8
2.3 Dynamic behavior of soil	9

2.3.1	Shear wave velocity (V_s)	10
2.3.2	Past research on shear-wave velocity (V_s)	11
2.4	Soil resistivity	13
2.5	Geophysics	14
2.6	Seismic	16
2.6.1	Seismic waves	17
2.6.1.1	Rayleigh wave	18
2.6.2	Seismograph	19
2.7	Multichannel analysis of surface waves (MASW)	20
2.7.1	Active MASW method	20
2.8	Factors influencing MASW data acquisition	23
2.8.1	Seismograph configuration	23
2.8.1.1	Acquisition setup	23
2.8.1.2	Receiver spread	24
2.8.1.3	Layout geometry	25
2.8.2	Equipment configuration	25
2.8.2.1	Receiver spacing	26
2.8.2.2	Source offset	26
2.8.2.3	Number of traces and total spread length	27
2.8.2.4	Type of source and receiver	28
2.8.3	Wave attenuation and amplitude	28
2.8.3.1	Spherical spreading	29
2.8.3.2	Absorption	29
2.8.3.3	Additional factors	30
2.8.4	Topography	30
2.8.5	Other related factors	31
2.9	Factors influencing MASW data processing	31
2.9.1	Dispersion curve plotting	31
2.9.1.1	Fundamental mode	33
2.9.1.2	Higher mode	33
2.9.2	Root mean square	33

2.9.3	Number of iterations	33
2.9.4	Stacking	34
2.10	Electrical Resistivity Method (ERM)	34
2.10.1	Type of array	37
2.10.1.1	Schlumberger array	37
2.10.1.2	Wenner array	38
2.10.1.3	Comparison of different arrays	39
2.10.2	Cation exchange capacity (CEC)	39
2.10.3	Factors affecting data acquisition	39
2.10.3.1	Type of setup	39
2.10.3.2	Electrode spacing	40
2.10.4	Factors affecting data processing	40
2.10.4.1	Apparent resistivity	40
2.10.4.2	Pseudosection data plotting method	41
2.10.4.3	Root mean square error	42
2.10.5	Electrical Resistivity Method software	42
2.10.5.1	RES2DMOD	42
2.10.5.2	RES2DINV	43
2.11	Chapter summary	43
CHAPTER 3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	44
3.1	Introduction	44
3.2	Site location	46
3.2.1	Parit Nipah, Johore	46
3.2.2	RECESS UTHM, Johore	48
3.3	Geophysical method	50
3.4	Multi-channel analysis of surface waves (MASW)	50
3.4.1	Instruments preparation	51
3.4.2	In-situ data acquisition	52
3.4.3	ABEM Terraloc Mk8 operation setup	55
3.4.4	Data processing and analyzing	60
3.4.5	Generated 1-D shear-wave velocity profile	61

3.5	Electrical Resistivity Method (ERM)	61
3.5.1	Instruments preparation	62
3.5.2	In-situ data acquisition	64
3.5.3	SAS 4000 terrameter configuration	66
3.5.4	Data processing and analyzing	69
3.5.5	Generated soil stratigraphy	73
3.6	Soil profile determination	73
3.7	Chapter summary	76
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	77
4.1	Introduction	77
4.2	Soil profile at Parit Nipah	77
4.3	Multichannel analysis of surface waves results	78
4.3.1	Dispersion curves obtained on peat	79
4.3.1.1	0.5 meter receiver spacing	79
4.3.1.2	1.0 meter receiver spacing	81
4.3.1.3	1.5 meter receiver spacing	84
4.3.2	Effect of receiver spacing on peat dispersion curves	86
4.3.3	Dispersion curves obtained on soft clay soil	88
4.3.3.1	0.5 meter receiver spacing	88
4.3.3.2	1 meter receiver spacing	91
4.3.3.3	1.5 meter receiver spacing	93
4.3.4	Effect of receiver spacing on soft clay dispersion curves	95
4.3.5	Comparison between dispersion curves obtained on peat and soft clay soil	96
4.3.6	Shear-wave velocity profile for peat	98
4.3.6.1	0.5 meter receiver spacing	98
4.3.6.2	1.0 meter receiver spacing	102
4.3.6.3	1.5 meter receiver spacing	106
4.3.7	Effect of receiver spacing on peat shear-wave velocity profiles	112

4.3.8	Shear-wave velocity profile for soft clay	114
4.3.8.1	0.5 meter receiver spacing	115
4.3.8.2	1.0 meter receiver spacing	118
4.3.8.3	1.5 meter receiver spacing	123
4.3.9	Effect of receiver spacing on soft clay shear-wave velocity profile	126
4.4	Electrical Resistivity Method	129
4.4.1	Soil stratigraphy for peat	129
4.4.1.1	1 m electrode spacing at x-axis	129
4.4.1.2	1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis	130
4.4.1.3	1 m electrode spacing at y-axis	131
4.4.1.4	1.5 m electrode spacing at y-axis	132
4.4.1.5	Comparison between soil profile obtained using ERM and peat sampler	133
4.4.2	Soil stratigraphy for soft clay	134
4.4.2.1	1 m electrode spacing at x-axis	135
4.4.2.2	1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis	136
4.4.2.3	0.3 m electrode spacing at y-axis	137
4.4.2.4	0.6 m electrode spacing at y-axis	138
4.4.2.5	Peat resistivity profile	140
4.4.3	Soft clay resistivity profile	148
4.5	Comparison between peat and soft clay shear-wave velocity	155
4.6	Comparison between peat and soft clay resistivity value	156
4.7	Correlation between peat shear-wave velocity and resistivity value	157
4.8	Correlation between soft clay shear-wave velocity and resistivity value	158
CHAPTER 5	CONCLUSION	160
5.1	Introduction	160

5.2 Objective 1: To determine shear-wave velocity (V_s) profile of soft soil using Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves	160
5.3 Objective 2: To identify the effect of different receiver spacing on MASW dispersion curve resolution	161
5.4 Objective 3: To determine the soft soil stratigraphy and resistivity value using Electrical Resistivity Method with complementary from peat sampler and borehole data.	161
5.5 Objective 4: To establish correlation between 1-D shear-wave velocity profile and 1-D resistivity value	162
5.6 Knowledge contribution	162
5.7 Recommendations for future research	163
REFERENCES	164



LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Peat soil distribution in Malaysia	7
2.2	Characteristic of organic material according to their degree of decomposition	8
2.3	The Von Post scale of humification	8
2.4	Field and laboratory test employed for dynamic investigation of soil	10
2.5	Site class definition	11
2.6	Summary of previous research regarding soil shear wave velocities	11
2.7	Resistivity of common geological materials	13
2.8	Summary of previous study on soil resistivity value	14
2.9	Summary of 12 commonly used geophysical surveying methods for geotechnical investigations	15
2.10	Data acquisition parameters for active MASW survey (in meters)	22
2.11	Sample interval and record length used by previous researchers	23
2.12	Equipment setup used by previous researchers	25
3.1	Borehole data from site investigation on RECESS UTHM soft soil	49
3.2	Summary of MASW configuration	53
3.3	List of equipment used for Electrical Resistivity Method	63
4.1	Soil profile at Parit Nipah	78
4.2	Percentage difference of minimum and maximum frequency with different receiver spacing at peat	87
4.3	Percentage difference of minimum and maximum frequency with different receiver spacing at soft clay	95
4.4	Summary of shear-wave velocity value obtained using 0.5 m receiver spacing	100

4.5	Summary of shear-wave velocity value obtained using 1 m receiver spacing	102
4.6	Summary of shear-wave velocity value obtained using 1.5 m receiver spacing	109
4.7	Summary of shear-wave velocity value of soft clay obtained using 0.5 m receiver spacing	116
4.8	Summary of shear-wave velocity value of soft clay obtained using 1 m receiver spacing	120
4.9	Summary of shear-wave velocity value of soft clay obtained using 1.5 m receiver spacing	124
4.10	Percentage difference between Schlumberger 1.5 m, Schlumberger 1 m and peat sampler	134
4.11	Peat resistivity value using 1 m electrode spacing at x-axis	141
4.12	Peat resistivity value using 1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis	142
4.13	Peat resistivity value using 1 m electrode spacing at y-axis	144
4.14	Peat resistivity value using 1.5 m electrode spacing at y-axis.	145
4.15	Soft clay resistivity value using 1 m electrode spacing at x-axis	148
4.16	Soft clay resistivity value using 1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis.	150
4.17	Soft clay resistivity value using 0.3 m electrode spacing at y-axis.	151
4.18	Soft clay resistivity value using 0.6 m electrode spacing at y-axis.	152

LIST OF FIGURES

2.2	The particle motions when the seismic waves pass the medium	18
2.3	Seismic wave front and seismic ray	18
2.4	Seismic waves recorded by seismogram	19
2.5	An illustration of different types of waves in MASW method	21
2.6	Typical terrain conditions favorable and unfavorable for the MASW survey	31
2.7	The three different models used in the interpretation of resistivity measurement	34
2.8	A conventional four electrode array (C1 and C2 – two current electrodes, P1 and P2 – resulting voltage difference at two potential electrodes) to measure the surface resistivity	35
2.9	Common array used in resistivity surveys and their geometrical factors	36
2.10	A simple electrical circuit	37
2.11	Definition of resistivity	37
2.12	Schlumberger array	38
2.13	Wenner array	38
2.14	The pseudosection build up by the measurement sequence	41
2.15	Arrangement of the blocks used in a model together with the data points in the pseudosection	42
3.1	Flowchart of methodology	45
3.2	Location of Parit Nipah	46
3.3	Geological map of Parit Raja	47
3.4	Site condition at Parit nipah	47
3.5	Location of RECESS, UTHM	48

3.6	Site condition at RECESS UTHM	49
3.7	Procedure of MASW	50
3.8	MASW instruments	51
3.9	Array line configuration	53
3.10	Active MASW instruments arrangement	54
3.11	ABEM Terraloc quick procedure	55
3.12	The quick menu	56
3.13	Acquisition setup menu	57
3.14	The trig setup menu	57
3.15	The noise monitor setup menu	58
3.16	The acquisition filter setup menu	58
3.17	Receiver spread dialog menu	59
3.18	Layout geometry dialog menu	59
3.19	Flowchart of SeisImager processes	60
3.20	Fundamental steps involved in ERM	62
3.21	Electrical Resistivity Method main equipment	63
3.22	Arrangement for short and long setup	64
3.23	Location of ERM array setup	65
3.24	Array line and pseudosection examples; (a) Wenner, (b) Schlumberger	65
3.25	The control knobs on the SAS 4000	66
3.26	Main dialog menu	66
3.27	Record manager menu	67
3.28	Record option	67
3.29	Example of VES with pre-defined protocols	68
3.30	Acquisition setting menu	68
3.31	Data acquisition interface	68
3.32	Power off selection	68
3.39	File option menu	69
3.40	Edit menu	70
3.41	Exterminate bad datum points option	70
3.42	Inversion menu	71

3.43	Save and read inversion file menu	72
3.44	Display sections submenu	72
3.45	2-D model	72
3.46	Print submenu	73
3.47	Sampling point layout	74
3.48	Peat sampler equipment	74
3.49	Peat sample obtain using peat sampler	75
3.50	General procedure to obtain sample using peat sampler	75
4.1	Dispersion curves obtained using 0.5 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 3 m and (c) 6 m; and from y-axis; (d) 0 m, (e) 3 m and (f) 6 m	80
4.2	Dispersion curves obtained using 1.0 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 3 m and (c) 6 m; and from y-axis; (d) 0 m, (e) 3 m and (f) 6 m	82
4.3	Dispersion curves obtained using 1.5 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 3 m and (c) 6 m; and from y-axis; (d) 0 m, (e) 3 m and (f) 6 m	85
4.4	Dispersion curves obtained using 0.5 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 5.75 m and (c) 11.5 m; and from y-axis; (d) 0 m, (e) 5.75 m and (f) 11.5 m	89
4.5	Dispersion curves obtained using 1.0 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 5.75 m and (c) 11.5 m; and from y-axis; (d) 0 m, (e) 5.75 m and (f) 11.5 m	92
4.6	Dispersion curves obtained using 1.5 m receiver spacing with different offset distance from x-axis; (a) 0 m, (b) 5.75 m and (c) 11.5 m	94
4.7	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of peat using 0.5 m receiver spacing	99
4.8	V_s for peat using 0.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	100
4.9	V_s for peat using 0.5 m receiver spacing at y-axis	101
4.10	Average V_s for peat using 0.5 m receiver spacing with respect to x-axis and y-axis	102
4.11	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of peat using 1 m receiver spacing	103

4.12	V_s for peat using 1 m receiver spacing at x-axis	105
4.13	V_s for peat using 1 m receiver spacing at y-axis	106
4.14	Average V_s for peat using 1 m receiver spacing with respect to x-axis and y-axis	106
4.15	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of peat using 1.5 m receiver spacing	107
4.16	V_s for peat using 1.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	110
4.17	V_s for peat using 1.5 m receiver spacing at y-axis	111
4.18	Average V_s for peat using 1.5 m receiver spacing with respect to x-axis and y-axis	111
4.19	Average V_s for peat using 0.5, 1 and 1.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	113
4.20	Average V_s for peat using 0.5, 1 and 1.5 m receiver spacing at y-axis	113
4.21	Average V_s of peat with respect to x-axis and y-axis	114
4.22	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of soft clay using 0.5 m receiver spacing	115
4.23	V_s of soft clay using 0.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	117
4.24	V_s of soft clay using 0.5 m receiver spacing at y-axis	117
4.25	Average V_s of soft clay using 0.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis and y-axis	118
4.26	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of soft clay using 1 m receiver spacing	119
4.27	V_s of soft clay using 1 m receiver spacing at x-axis	121
4.28	V_s of soft clay using 1 m receiver spacing at y-axis	122
4.29	Average V_s of soft clay using 1 m receiver spacing with respect to x-axis and y-axis	122
4.30	1-D shear-wave velocity profile of soft clay using 1.5 m receiver spacing	123
4.31	V_s of soft clay using 1.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	125
4.32	Average V_s of soft clay using 1.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	125
4.33	Average V_s of soft clay using 0.5 m, 1 m and 1.5 m receiver spacing at x-axis	127
4.34	Average V_s of soft clay using 0.5 m, 1 m and 1.5 m receiver spacing at y-axis	128

4.35	Average Vs of soft clay with respect to x-axis and y-axis	128
4.36	Peat stratigraphy using 1 m electrode spacing at x-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	130
4.37	Peat stratigraphy using 1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	131
4.38	Peat stratigraphy using 1 m electrode spacing at y-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	132
4.39	Peat stratigraphy using 1.5 m electrode spacing at y-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	133
4.40	Soft clay stratigraphy using 1 m electrode spacing at x-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	136
4.41	Soft clay stratigraphy using 1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	137
4.42	Soft clay stratigraphy using 0.3 m electrode spacing at y-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	138
4.43	Soft clay stratigraphy using 0.6 m electrode spacing at y-axis; (a) Schlumberger array, (b) Wenner array	140
4.44	Peat resistivity value using 1 m electrode spacing at x-axis	141
4.45	Peat resistivity value using 1.5 m electrode spacing at x-axis	143
4.46	Peat resistivity value using 1 m electrode spacing at y-axis	144
4.47	Peat resistivity value using 1.5 m electrode spacing at y-axis	146
4.48	Peat resistivity value with different configuration	147
4.49	Resistivity value of soft clay using 1 m spacing at x-axis	149
4.50	Resistivity value of soft clay using 1.5 m spacing at x-axis	150
4.51	Resistivity value of soft clay using 0.3 m spacing at y-axis	151
4.52	Resistivity value of soft clay using 0.6 m spacing at y-axis	153
4.53	Comparison of resistivity value obtained using different array configuration	154
4.54	Comparison between shear-wave velocity of peat and soft clay	156
4.55	Comparison between the resistivity value of peat and soft clay	157
4.56	Correlation between peat shear-wave velocity and resistivity value	158

4.57	Correlation between soft clay shear-wave velocity and resistivity value	159
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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

c	Damping coefficient
c_c	Critical damping coefficient
CEC	Cation exchange capacity
D	Damping ratio
D_{\min}	Minimum damping ratio
dx	Receiver spacing
ERM	Electrical Resistivity Method
$f-v$	Frequency-velocity
G_{\max}	Maximum shear modulus
h	Thickness
I	Current
L_o	Array line offset distance
MASW	Multichannel Analysis of Surface waves
ρ	Density
R	Resistance
RMS	Root mean square
RMSE	Root mean square error
S/N	Signal to noise
V	Voltage
V_p	P-wave velocity
V_s	Shear-wave velocity
X_1	Source offset
Z_{\max}	Maximum depth of investigation

LIST OF APPENDIX

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Borehole data for RECESS	173
B	Borehole data geotechnical investigation report	174



PTTA UTHM
PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Nowadays, geophysical method had been widely used in geotechnical investigation. Some of the methods which are commonly used are Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves (MASW) and Electrical Resistivity Method (ERM). The application of the geophysical method in soil investigation, especially concerning soft soil is very limited. Hence, this research focused on the application of geophysical method on the soft soil investigation.

Geophysics method, such as MASW is designed to map spatial variations in the physical properties of soil. The main advantage of MASW is its ability to take into full account the complicated nature of seismic waves that always contain noise such as unwanted higher modes of surface waves, body waves, scattered waves, traffic waves, etc., as well as fundamental-mode surface waves (Park et al., 2007). The MASW method is divided into two, which are, active and passive. The active MASW method was introduced in geophysics in 1999. It adopts the conventional mode of survey using an active seismic source (e.g., a sledge hammer). It utilizes surface waves propagating horizontally along the surface of the measurement directly from the impact point to receivers. MASW also gives shear-wave velocity (V_s) information in either 1-D (depth) or 2-D (depth and surface location) format at a cost effective and time-efficient manner. The maximum depth of investigation (z_{\max}) is usually less than 30 m, but this can vary with the site and type of active source used (Park et al., 2007).

The ERM is a geophysical method used to determine the subsurface resistivity distribution by injecting current into the ground through two current electrodes (C1 and C2), and measuring the resulting voltage difference at two potential electrodes (P1 and P2) (Loke, 1999). The Electrical Resistivity Method comprises of a 1-D sounding survey, 2-D imaging survey and 3-D surveys. The ability of 2-D Earth resistivity measurement to map the electrical resistivity distribution in the Earth allows the estimation of the subsurface heterogeneity (Slob, 2004).

Soft soil is considered as challenging soil especially due to its special features and high degree of compressibility. Peat is a representative material of soft soils and classified as highly organic with organic content more than 75% (Kolay et al., 2011). It is brownish in color and is formed by decomposed organic matter that have accumulated over a thousand years, with lack of oxygen and under waterlogged conditions. Peat is well known to deform and fail under light surcharge load, and it is characterized with low shear strength (5-20 kPa), high compressibility, high organic content (>75%) and high water content (>200%) (Zainorabidin and Wijeyesekera, 2007). While, clay is a fine-grained soil material that become plastic due to their water content and non-plastic when dried. The clay soil material also combines one or more clay minerals with traces of metal oxides and organic matter.

1.2 Problem statement

Geotechnical investigation is a critical pre-construction work especially concerning the soft soil. Various parameters are determined and observed during the investigation which include surface exploration and subsurface exploration. Dynamic soil properties and soil stratigraphy are some important parameters in subsurface exploration. Dynamic soil properties determination especially the shear-wave velocity is considered an important parameter when dealing with super structure and large construction. As mentioned by Ivanov et al. (2015), stiffness properties of near surface materials are important for engineering applications and shear-wave velocity is directly related to stiffness. It is also a critical parameters in geotechnical earthquake engineering problems. While, the soil stratigraphy provides description of the soil physical characteristics.

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